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Jesuit Missionaries' Suffering and Disappointment in the *Neue Welt-Bott*

Introduction[1]

In the early modern Jesuit context, missions, martyrdom, and suffering are so closely interlinked that the willingness to suffer or even die for the glory of God has been singled out as a hallmark of the Jesuit missionary.[2] Admittedly, many put themselves in real danger especially on the untamed mission frontiers, and the Society of Jesus made sure to commemorate the blood spilled in its service. Narrative and visual depictions of Jesuit martyrs abounded in the wake of the post-Tridentine revival of Catholicism and Catholic martyrs. Within the order, martyrs formed an inspiring template on which to model one's own life.[3] As Ulrike Strasser has noted, martyrdom had a double boost effect on Jesuit missions in that it "promised both a rich harvest of new Christians and new missionaries". She continues:

> As the most heroic form of death, [martyrdom] engendered moral exemplars whose redemptive suffering in faraway lands drew other men into the missions, thus extending the reach of the order's corporate body in space and time.[4]

[1] This article has been written with the financial support of the Academy of Finland (project number 1275246).

[2] Downes 2005, 348–349.

[3] See e.g., Brockey 2007, 6, 227; Clossey 2008, 119–121, 125; Maldavsky 2012, 164.

[4] Strasser 2015, 560. See also Maldavsky 2012, 157, 163.

Similarly, Renato Cymbalista has argued in his study of Jesuit martyrdom in 16th and early 17th century Portuguese America that martyrdom in fact was part and parcel of "the argument of Jesuits who were already in Brazil, calling for companions" in the overseas missions.[5] The reward for the missionaries' suffering, pain and martyrdom would be nothing less than the soul's salvation and eternal life.

The religious framework for experiencing and discussing Jesuit suffering, a classic Christian *topos*, is obvious. However, reading Jesuit stories of suffering from a history of emotions point of view, as I will do in the following, sheds light on the complex relationship of religion and emotions in the early modern era that is beginning to be explored in more depth by scholars.[6] In this article, I will provide a tentative reading of German-language accounts from global Jesuit missions from the perspective of suffering, martyrdom, and disappointment, guided by insights of recent research into the history of early modern emotions. I will use the term 'emotions' as shorthand for early modern affects and passions for easier communication, although emotions as such is of course a more recent concept.[7]

I draw from the German-language Jesuit periodical *Der Neue Welt-Bott* ("The New World-Messenger"), which appeared in print from 1726 to 1758. Similar to the 17th-century Jesuit accounts from New France that were distributed in the well-known *Relations*, or the French Jesuit periodical *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, the *Neue Welt-Bott* is a rich blend of different

[5] Cymbalista 2010, 292.

[6] For recent works on Jesuit emotions, see, e.g., Garrod 2015; Haskell 2011; Haskell 2016; Molina 2013; Molina 2015. There have been studies that focus on religion and emotion, but only relatively rarely for the early modern period and usually only within one religious group. According to Corrigan 2013, theologians and religious scholars tend to take emotions for granted as a universal category and reflect too little on their historicity and variability. For a first comparative approach in the context of the Reformation, see Karant-Nunn 2010. Eitler et al. 2014 have recently provided a sharp analysis of the interplay between Christianity and emotions from the perspective of modern history.

[7] Plamper 2015, 10–12. The most influential interpretations of affects and passions go back to Augustine and Thomas of Aquinas, who, to put it very simply, viewed affects as a positive movement of the soul towards God, while passions described movement in the opposite direction, away from God. Dixon 2003, 54–56. On the much-criticized ahistorical projection of modern concepts and emotions to the past, see, e.g., the discussion in Dixon 2003, 20–25.

literary genres such as travel accounts, ethnographic descriptions, and scientific treatises, but also hagiography, martyr stories, and confessional writings.[8] It assembled over eight-hundred individual accounts by missionaries active in the Americas and Asia, with a special emphasis on China and Paraguay. While the old Chinese civilization can be seen as an "anti-topos to the missionary fields of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies",[9] it was Paraguay with its successful reductions more than any other mission that represented both the merits and sacrifices – indeed, the martyrdom – of the Jesuit enterprise in the accounts of the *Neue Welt-Bott*. Consequently, the harsher the public critique against the Society grew in the 18th century, the more the *Neue Welt-Bott* praised Paraguay.[10] The emotional dimension of the Jesuit mission project is thus reflected already in the general composition of the publication.[11]

Some of the material had been published before, mainly in the French *Lettres*, while other texts were written and sent directly to the *Neue Welt-Bott* editor in southern Germany/Austria. The new material consisted mainly of accounts written by German-speaking missionaries who wanted to tell their story alongside those already circulating in print. On the German book market, the work was valued especially for its news from South America.[12] However, I would like to emphasize that the *Neue Welt-Bott* also testified to the intensified martyr cultures of post-Reformation Christianity in a global context, contributing to the distribution of Catholic martyr stories and role models from around the world.[13]

[8] Greer 2000, 14–15; Hausberger 2007, 633–647.

[9] Hsia 2014, 63.

[10] Borja González 2004, 74–75; Borja González 2011, 145–149; Hsia 2014, 49.

[11] On the role of emotions in early modern missions as a bourgeoning field of historical research, see, with further references, Van Gent & Young 2015; Van Gent 2015a.

[12] Borja González 2011, 149–151.

[13] Gregory 1999, 250–254; Strasser 2015, 569, 573–577. On the global orientation of the Society of Jesus, see also Clossey 2008. For indigenous views on and adaptations of Jesuit martyrdom, see Cymbalista 2010, who argues that the Indians in Portuguese America associated martyrs with warriors and prophets, interpretations that the Jesuit missionaries readily applied in their attempted dialogue with the locals.

The *Neue Welt-Bott* was aimed at a double audience in Europe: those within or close to the order, including potential donors and future missionaries, and the broader, educated reading public beyond the confessional divide.[14] In the production process, the role of the editor was central. Not only was he responsible for the choice of accounts to be included, but he also enjoyed great freedom to abridge, merge and comment on the individual texts.[15] On the whole, the *Neue Welt-Bott* allows an analysis of the Jesuits' world-wide communication networks and practices in a single case study. Although the work has long been known to researchers, it still yields numerous possibilities for fresh insights.[16]

Mapping Jesuit emotions

In his 1726 preface to the reader, the first editor of the *Neue Welt-Bott*, Joseph Stöcklein (1676–1733), linked the Jesuits' missionary work to two predominant emotions, namely "consolation and misery" (*Trost und Elend*).[17] In his short introductory notes to individual accounts, Stöcklein further mapped the emotional territory of the missions. Consolation and misery played a significant role here too. Consolation was understood by the Jesuits as an emotion or activity grounded in meditation and prayer where the believer achieved a state of "inner happiness" or illumination through his or her contact with the Almighty.[18] In connection with successful conversions, joy and hope were added to this repertoire of feelings.[19] This is in line

[14] Borja González 2011, 136. See also Hsia 2014, 49.

[15] Borja González 2011, 132–134.

[16] With further references to historiography, see the most important recent studies on the *Neue Welt-Bott*, Borja González 2011, esp. 124–145; Dürr 2007, 2013.

[17] *Der Neue Welt-Bott* (hereafter: NWB) I:1, II. Absatz, Allgemeine Vorrede des Verfassers über dieses gantze Werck [no page numbers]. On the similar emotional cluster of consolation, resolution, and joy, often found among the *indipetae* letters and lists of newly-appointed missionaries, see Castelnau-L'Estoile 2007, 30–31; Županov 2012, 127.

[18] Molina 2013, 80.

[19] See, e.g., Stöcklein's introduction to the letters of Franz Xaver Zephyris in 1727 and 1728. NWB III:17 (no. 389) 99, (no. 390) 108.

with the observation of Renate Dürr that a constituent feature of the stories assembled in the *Neue Welt-Bott* is exactly their emotionality and that the missionaries' narratives are especially laden with expressions of fear and joy.[20]

How do we make sense of these past and narrativized emotions? The history of emotions is currently a prospering field of inquiry. A recent trend has been to regard emotions as socially constructed, and therefore relational, binding or dividing people. Such an understanding of emotions directs our gaze towards power relations and hierarchies of difference in the given historical, social and political context. Emotions, although felt in an actual human body, were experienced and expressed in relation to both the self and to others, or within "emotional communities", to quote the concept coined by Barbara Rosenwein.[21] Moreover, as Susan Broomhall has argued, "emotions arise as a result of a dialogue between one's self and a reality or world beyond" and by doing this, "assist in defining, refining and highlighting individual identity".[22] Specifically in regard to the emotionality of missionary encounters, Jacqueline Van Gent and Spencer Young have underlined that emotions actively "do things". Furthermore, "their appearance in historical sources can be investigated in various ways. For example, they can function as rules dictating norms of acting; they help shape the self; and they can express, and even create, power relations".[23]

The accounts assembled in the *Neue Welt-Bott* open up important vistas into Jesuit emotional repertoires and practices of self-modelling. And yet, as a 'self' is constructed in a continual process of negotiation and revision, shaped by the selection of memories, stories, and emotions "out of a range of available materials, including memories, but also narrative conventions,

[20] Dürr 2013, ch. 2.2 [no page numbers]. See also Van Gent 2015a, 556. For the relation between fear and religion as one of the more studied emotions, see Eitler et al. 2014, 346.

[21] Broomhall 2008, 10, 13; Rosenwein 2010, 11–12; Rosenwein 2002, 842–44; Scheer 2012, 211.

[22] Broomhall 2008, 12–13.

[23] Van Gent & Young 2015, 463.

cultural stereotypes, myths, collective expectations",[24] the 'selves' displayed in the accounts of the *Neue Welt-Bott* have to be understood as reflections of this process rather than anything else. However, exactly these "complex and varied possibilities for being selves" make the analysis fruitful.[25] Being composed with an eye to the reading public does not hamper the analysis when bearing in mind the enormous cultural potential of emulation that was one of the motives behind the publication.[26]

Hagiographic accounts of Jesuit martyrs are regularly integrated into the *Neue Welt-Bott*. However, not every life (or rather, death) story could be included, as editor Stöcklein pointed out in his preface. Those without a full account were still celebrated in the long lists of names of martyrs and other exemplary witnesses of faith placed at the end of each *Neue Welt-Bott* volume. The lists were usually followed by a short appraisal by the volume's editor, for example:

> How blissful would it be, if I were to depart in such a manner of, I will not call it dying, rather departing into eternal life, as these brave men have done, whose only desire it has been to travel to India and become, according to their wish, slaughter offerings (*Schlacht≠Opffer*)?[27]

Repeated textual contemplation of suffering was an integral part of the Jesuit missionaries' complex emotional process of coping, self-modelling, and reassuring oneself about one's identity and place in the world. Writing emotions was also a practice of relating to both other

[24] Cubitt 2007, 91–2.

[25] Sabean & Stefanovska 2012, 3.

[26] On the outspoken motives of publication, see, e.g., the general preface by the first editor, Joseph Stöcklein. NWB I:1 [no page numbers]. See also Dürr 2007; Borja González 2011, 127–128.

[27] "Wie glückseelig wurd ich mich nicht schätzen/ wann ich eines gleichen Tods/ ich sag nicht sterben/ sondern zu einem unsterblichen Leben abfahren solte? aus wessen einziger Begierde diese tapffere Männer nach Indien gereiset und daselbst nach ihrem Wunsch zum Schlacht≠Opffer worden seynd." NWB I:1, Vorrede des ersten Theils [no page numbers]. For similar testimonies of Jesuits in Portuguese America, see Cymbalista 2010, 294.

people and the divine, an aspect that may have gained in importance if the writer was in unfamiliar surroundings.[28] Martyrdom and suffering formed central narrative spaces for discussing fundamental issues of Jesuit missionary existence, emotions, and identity.[29]

All these factors may have held especially true for those German-speaking missionaries who penned the accounts incorporated into the *Neue Welt-Bott* corpus in addition to the translated French *Lettres*. Not only did they feel the need to recount their own experiences, thus inscribing their lives into the history of both the Society and Catholic Christendom, but the setting of their missionary work in the front line of the colonial empires was also oftentimes a particularly harsh one. While Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Jesuits usually tended to their compatriots in the Latin American missions in established settlements, central European Jesuits were primarily sent to the less peaceful frontier mission stations, for instance along the Amazon or Orinoco rivers. Faced thus with a "double culture shock", missionaries from the German Assistancy were left to deal with the strangeness of both Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits and the indigenous people.[30] Given the uneasy situation in the frontier missions, opportunities for suffering and martyrdom presented themselves to the central European Jesuits in abundance. They were, moreover, eager to present their hardship and successes to a wider audience in print, in part surely, as Galaxis Borja González has argued, to emphasize the achievements of the German-speaking Jesuits in contrast to others.[31]

According to Ulrike Strasser, reading and writing, and distributing the writings by way of print, turned out to be pivotal "mimetic operations and technologies for producing new saints for the Society in a global age".[32] Jesuits were trained to reflect and write on a regular basis, and

[28] See also Dürr 2007, 462–465.

[29] On narrative spaces and emotions, see also Jarzebowski 2015, 254.

[30] Hsia 2014, 58–59.

[31] Borja González 2011, 160–164.

[32] Strasser 2015, 569.

putting their thoughts and observations on paper in the missions, was, as Paul Nelles has suggested, a selection process of "sifting through the barrage of experience in order that truly significant phenomena could be isolated and brought into focus".[33] Discussing pain, suffering, and disappointment in these texts has therefore to be seen as a conscious choice of the writers, who, furthermore, framed their stories largely fitting into the conventions of writing Jesuit mission reports.

Suffering is and has always been a central category of the Christian faith. The Bible alone stated different reasons for human suffering. In the Old Testament world sickness and suffering were closely associated with sin, as Amanda Porterfield has argued in her book *Healing in the History of Christianity* (2005): "God chastised Israel for her sins and turned her toward repentance with punishments of sickness, barrenness, disgrace, and misery."[34] Although omnipotent and thoroughly good, as explained by the Christian teaching of theodicy, God could test the believer's faith by making him or her suffer. Since the Church fathers, suffering was increasingly linked to Christ's passion. Thomas Aquinas regarded suffering as a consequence of the fall of man, whereas the late medieval *devotio moderna* laid emphasis on the Christian's inner suffering.[35]

The Council of Trent relied heavily on Aquinas when it formulated, in its Decree of Original Sin, that due to the original sin inherited from Adam and Eve, Christians "share in the same penalties they suffered: deprivation of divine grace, psychological disorder, bodily suffering, and ultimately death". They are exposed to two kinds of evil, the evil of fault or moral evil (*malum culpae*) on the one side, and the evil of punishment (*malum poenae*) on the other, the

[33] Nelles 2010, 327.

[34] Porterfield 2005, 5.

[35] Gerwing 1991. See also Freeman 2007, 7–9, 20–21, 30.

latter signifying "the pain and suffering of our fallen condition".[36] This classic teaching concludes, according to Nicolas Lombardo, that

> While God is never the author of moral evil, he is the author of punishment—not in the modern sense of punishment, which tends to see punishment mainly in terms of retributive justice, but in the ancient, holistic sense of punishment, which emphasizes the role of correction and guidance. God does not necessarily will each instance of suffering we experience under the aspect of punishment, let alone intervene to bring it about, but he did will to create a world where our sins have consequences and where we can therefore learn from our mistakes.[37]

The Christian martyrs' suffering, however, was not brought on by their sinfulness – quite the contrary. Pain was imposed on them from the outside, in the context of the missions, often by hostile heathens. Such suffering resembled the testing of Job and other biblical figures. In post-Tridentine Catholicism, contemporary martyrdom was, moreover, intrinsically tied to the venerable lineage of early Christian martyrs.[38] As the "highest form of imitation of Christ", martyrdom was "surpassingly valuable", "eminently desirable", and good, despite any (passing) physical pain.[39] Further, as Peter Burschel has argued, Jesuit martyrs were presented as highly proactive (and one would like to add, extremely masculine), heroic fighters for the Catholic faith, rather than as passive and submissive subjects in the face of death. Their main success lay not so much in their death for the right cause, but in the conversion of as many pagans as possible during their lifetime.[40] At the same time, "it was in the very act of labouring

[36] Lombardo 2016.

[37] Lombardo 2016.

[38] Gregory 1999, 277–281.

[39] Gregory 1999, 279. See also Cohen 2000, 45–47, 68.

[40] Burschel 2004, 281–282. On the passive suffering of martyrs as a gendered practice, see, e.g., Shephardson 2004; Hickerson 2007. On Jesuit masculinity, see Strasser 2008; Laven 2015.

for the salvation for potential converts that the Jesuit missionary worked out his own salvation", as Luke Clossey has emphasized.[41]

Mary Laven has recently reminded us of the strong corporeal dimension of Catholic and, as part of it, Jesuit spirituality. Jesuits embraced the traditional focus of Christianity on Christ's bodily suffering and death, and celebrated in the Eucharist the transformation of Christ's body into bread and wine. As Catholics, they had further developed a strong sense for physical pain and suffering through the exemplary lives of Christian saints and martyrs. Moreover, many Jesuits were themselves willing to suffer in the name of God up to the point of death and were prone to interpret even small ailments along these lines.[42]

Suffering in the *Neue Welt-Bott*

The interconnection between mission, the missionaries' suffering, and martyrdom is evident in the accounts of the *Neue Welt-Bott*. Suffering of the converts is much less of an issue; it is either not discussed, or, in some instances, the quiet pining of indigenous converts on their death-beds is presented as a model for the European readership to follow in their lives.[43]

The suffering itself could be seen as purifying, strengthening, and good. It placed the Jesuit sufferer in the long tradition of Christian saints and martyrs (and also Christ's passion) who had suffered for the glory of God and the Catholic church. This also shaped the missionaries' views on their own bodily afflictions. In the words of Mary Laven, the Jesuit missionaries

[41] Clossey 2008, 121.

[42] On the other hand, when disadvantageous to their goals, Jesuit missionaries could also downplay the corporeal traits of their religion, as Laven has shown for Matteo Ricci's catechism published for the Chinese market, which omitted references to Christ's passion and shameful death on the cross. Laven 2013, 74–75.

[43] See, e.g., NWB I:7 (no. 169), 63–64.

> enjoyed a strong sense of their calling to martyrdom, and they were quick to interpret even minor illnesses and indispositions – an arthritic knee or an injured foot – in this light.[44]

And indeed, a number of Jesuits were martyred, although they usually died of something more violent than an arthritic knee. Yet it is significant that, in order to be honoured as a martyr, one did not necessarily need to die at the hands of hostile natives. The *Neue Welt-Bott* refers to cases of missionaries dying in the course of their travels or due to illness. There were also several examples of missionaries dying as result of nursing plague patients.[45] They were, all the same, enlisted in the *Neue Welt-Bott* catalogues of martyrs and other blood witnesses (*Blut≠Zeugen*).[46] Sickness, suffering, and martyrdom thus form a very complex web of interconnected meanings and practices that is central both to the missionaries' self-image and self-modelling.

Narrated suffering was integrated into the different stages of a missionary's life and career, such as the travel overseas, arrival and work at the mission station, and at the prospect of a violent martyr's death at the hands of hostile natives. Renato Cymbalista has even proposed that already "setting off for the colonies was at times literally taken as martyrdom".[47] Indeed, it has been estimated that only about half of the outbound Jesuits arrived safely overseas.[48] Consequently, it was not uncommon for new missionaries to begin their first letters home with an account of their suffering or illness during the travel or, once arrived in the new surroundings, because of the climate their bodies were not accustomed to.[49]

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[44] Laven 2013, 74.

[45] See, e.g., NWB I:6 (no. 146), 97; NWB I:7 (no. 169), 66.

[46] See, e.g., the list at the end of NWB I:8 for the first eight volumes of the work, NWB I:8 [no page numbers].

[47] Cymbalista 2010, 292.

[48] Brockey 2007, 234.

[49] Županov 2012, 133–134.

Georg Brandt was one to describe the torments of the outbound journey. He interpreted his voyage to Panama in 1686 as a rehearsal for possibly a later actual martyrdom, characterizing the eight-month journey over land and sea as a veritable school of suffering or martyrdom (*Marter≠Schule*).[50] The arduousness of the trip had tried the nerves of Brandt and his fellow travellers beyond anything they knew before, but Brandt coined this painful experience as a welcome chance to practise for his future as a missionary.[51]

> We express our childish gratitude to the creator of all grace for letting us take part in his suffering from the very beginning through these many crosses, and yet he miraculously sustained us with superhuman strength so that we may fulfil the tribulations that still lie ahead of us and follow those fellow priests from this world to the next, who succumbed to the misery, some of them during the journey, some of them here [in the mission].[52]

To what extent is this suffering specifically Jesuit? It has been shown that early modern Protestant clerics preferred to frame their life-stories as testimonies of pain and suffering. Some scholars have also suggested that Catholic life-narratives rarely encompassed such "spiritual torments" as did especially the more radical Protestant groups.[53] The revival of martyrdom in the wake of the Reformation took different forms within Catholicism than in the other denominations. For Catholics, martyrdom was an option only for a few select Christians – not

[50] NWB I:1 (no. 27), 72.

[51] However, most Jesuit travel descriptions focus more on the hardships of the journey after arriving overseas. See, e.g., Meyer & Nebgen 2008, 84–85; Borja González 2011, 89.

[52] "Niemals haben neue Missionarii auf ihrer Reise nach Indien mehr Müheseligkeiten/ als ich samt meinen Gefährten zu Wasser und Land mit mehr als menschlicher Gedult übertragen/ für welche wir dem Urheber aller Gnaden kindlichen Danck sagen/ daß er gleich von Anfang uns seines Leidens durch so mancherley über einander gehäuffte Creutz theilhafftig machen/ und dannoch über menschliche Kräfften hat bey dem Leben wunderbarlicher Weise so lang erhalten wollen/ bis daß wir nemlich die Maß der uns noch bevorstehenden Drangsalen erfüllen und unsern Mit≠Priestern/ so theils hier theils unter Weegs vor Elend verschmachtet seynd/ von der neuen in die andere Welt nachfolgen." NWB I:1 (no. 27), 71.

[53] Heiligensetzer 2007, 12–13; Mullan 2010, 15.

a generic feature "of simply being a Christian" and continually living in mortal danger, as was the case, for example, for the continuously persecuted Anabaptists.[54]

Although not necessarily officially canonized, post-Tridentine Catholic martyrs were, according to Brad Gregory, generally treated as saints who could act as intercessors for the faithful immediately after their deaths. The cultural and religious meanings of these new martyrs cut across different groups within Catholicism such as "clergy and laity, elite and popular, devout and conformist".[55] The interpretative context was also different from Protestantism. Catholic martyrdom was not understood against the backdrop of apocalyptic battles, but rather integrated into the long tradition of the Christian church. Therefore, it was especially the Catholics who found inspiration in the examples of early Christian martyrs.[56]

As Ines Županov has noted, the Society's official take on martyrdom was to "avoid rather than seek it out at all costs, […] especially in the overseas missions". In other words, "the desire for martyrdom was excellent, but the renunciation of martyrdom for greater efforts at learning languages and pastoral and missionary work was even better."[57] Therefore, quotidian forms of suffering may have offered a viable option for those seeking martyrdom but not wanting to overstep official ideals. This attitude is reflected in the words of the French Jesuit Father Le Gac, whose 1714 letter from India was included in the *Neue Welt-Bott*. Le Gac claimed to be prepared and willing to die at the hands of hostile natives, but deemed it even more important to stay alive and continue his work as a shepherd of souls in "this new Christendom".[58]

[54] Gregory 1999, 254, 287.

[55] Gregory 1999, 252–253, 297.

[56] Gregory 1999, 272, 280–282.

[57] Županov 2012, 154–155. See also Maldavsky 2012, 167.

[58] NWB I: 6 (no. 146), 98.

This work was by no means easy, but entailed all kinds of practical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties. Sometimes, even though progress was clearly quantifiable (and the Jesuits did like to count the souls they had managed to save), a missionary could still be anxious. Joseph Neumann, for one, had, according to his own calculation, baptized no less than 16,000 people with his fellow missionaries during the six years he had spent among the Tarahumara in northern Mexico. Still he was not content. Instead, he complained,

> we lead here a quasi-hermitic life (*gleichsam ein Einsiedlerisches Leben*), where all human consolation is lacking, even that comfort which the messengers of the Gospel would normally draw from their newly converted heathens.[59]

The usual emotional strategy of finding comfort and strength from successful conversions now failed Neumann and his companions. The German *Einöde* (desert, solitude) or *einsiedlerisch*, translated here roughly as "hermitic", are terms that are used in the accounts to mark loneliness as well as emotional and geographic distance of the missionaries from their peers and family.[60] In 1699, Wenceslaus Breyer went so far as to claim that he would not mind dying, but he would be much less eager to be transferred to the out-of-the-way mission station that was the working ground of his colleague Samuel Fritz, who encountered innumerable dangers along the river banks and thus was more than likely to end up as a martyr.[61]

Sometimes the awareness of how the failures would affect the public image of the Society resonate in the accounts. Johann Haffenecker too was faced with little or no progress at all in his mission station in Surat, south-east India in 1658. Recently, the local neophytes had been

[59] "… führen wir allhier gleichsam ein Einsiedlerisches Leben/ als dem es an allem menschlichen Trost gebricht/ auch so gar an demjenigen/ welchen sonst die Evangelische Botten ab ihren neu≠bekehrten Heyden schöpffen." NWB I:1 (no. 32), 103.

[60] See, e.g., NWB III:17 (no. 389), 99. Joseph Neumann's sojourn in Mexico was an exceptionally long one, from 1680 to his death, at the age of eighty-four, in 1732. Clossey 2008, 136.

[61] NWB I:2 (no. 51), 68.

relapsing into their old religious ways to such an extent that the so far undamaged body of the "great Indian Apostle", St. Xavier, had been showing signs of clear irritation by way of slightly "diminishing". Grueber further lamented his own pain at watching the setbacks.

> Oh! How does it hurt a missionary to observe such things or to report them to Europe? A missionary, I say, whose only ambition it is to convert the heathens, when he has to see with his own eyes how vexatious Satan sows weeds among the good seed, and thereby at times his thistles spoil our seed in the ground.[62]

Even when troubled, the Jesuit missionaries sought to present themselves in their accounts as loyal servants of God and the Society who are fearless in their tasks, but feel the heavy burden of their calling. Luke Clossey has characterized this as the Jesuits' strong determination to "celebrate or do 'the work' of God", both in a very literal, hands-on, and a more metaphorical way.[63] Hereby, the writing missionaries reproduced the ideal of the 'new man' as outlined by the Society's founder Ignatius of Loyola – in touch with his feelings, yet active, strong, and controlled, a man who spreads his message with words and reason instead of force.[64] And yet, the rhetoric of battle and soldierhood, not surprising considering Loyola's military background, could also be employed to underline the scale and value of the missionaries' sacrifices when comparing their suffering to that of soldiers.[65]

[62] "Ach! wie wehe thut es einem Missionario dergleichen Sachen zu vernehmen oder nach Europam zu berichten? einem Missionario, sag ich/ wessen eintziges Absehen die Bekehrung dern Heyden ist/ wann er mit Augen muß ansehen/ wie bald der leidige Satan Unkraut unter den guten Weitzen säe/ mithin durch seine Disteln unsere Saat in den Grund verderbe." NWB I:1 (no. 34), 112.

[63] Clossey 2008, 123–124.

[64] Strasser 2008, esp. 60–61. See also NWB III:17 (no. 390), 108–109. On Ignatian ideals among aspiring missionaries, see also Castelnau-L'Estoile 2007, 30–31; Maldavsky 2012, 165.

[65] Military rhetoric, popular among young males in the war-ridden Europe of the 17th century, may have appealed especially to the younger Jesuits. Maldavsky 2012, 167–168.

Disappointment as loss of consolation?

Less pervasive than the references to martyrdom are the cases in the *Neue Welt-Bott* in which the Jesuit missionaries express disappointment in their work and life in the missions. They are nevertheless noteworthy, as they undermine the narrative logic of legitimizing Jesuit activities and offering models for imitation. The ideal missionary might at times struggle with himself, but there was no need to put this in print for a potentially critical audience, especially if the story did not culminate in the overcoming of the inner and outer obstacles. It is in these instances where important disruptions in the narrative can be observed and analysed.[66] The feeling often emerged out of difficulties in mission work and could be expressed and interpreted both in spiritual and more mundane terms. However, the writers did not refer to disappointment with this perhaps too modern word. Instead, they described the causes and effects of this emotion, for example the loss of comfort, confidence, or hope for the future due to slow mission progress, desolate material conditions, or hostile attacks of natives.

Although many young Jesuits were keen to be sent overseas as missionaries, some of them also hoping to die a glorious martyr's death, others found themselves astounded and even disappointed once faced with the realities of the missions.[67] For instance, Anton Sepp and Anton Böhm, who arrived in Yapeyú, Paraguay in 1692, could not hide their surprise when they realized what practical multi-tasking awaited them. In their travelogue, published a few years after their arrival, Sepp, who seemed to be the main narrator, described how he found

[66] On the narrative ruptures, see also Van Gent 2015b, 247.

[67] On the aspiring missionaries, see, e.g., Brockey 2007, 227; Castelnau-L'Estoile 2007; Clossey 2008, 114–135; Laven 2015, 545–546; Županov 2012, 123, 127. On the missionaries' often unrealistic ideas of their future work environment, see Maldavsky 2012, 155–156. Maldavsky even proposes that the Society of Jesus may have deliberately cultivated a vague, or at times even erroneous, picture of the overseas missions in order to reinforce the missionary candidates' vocational calling. Maldavsky 2012, 163–164.

himself, much to his astonishment, advising the cooks in the kitchen and supervising the dishes.[68]

> Who in Europe would have thought that a missionary has to consider such things? I would not have believed it, and still cannot believe it, although I see it with my own eyes, feel it with my own hands.[69]

Similar lamentations are recurrent in the *Neue Welt-Bott* accounts. Wenceslaus Breyer, for instance, drafted a long list of obstacles to the missionary work in the Amazonas region in 1699, including the necessity to be one's own shoemaker, tailor and butcher.[70]

Personal shortcomings in mission work could also engender disappointment, frustration, and spiritual pain. Therefore, when Hieronymus Franchi described his gout that had seriously interfered with his work in China in 1710, he not only sought to explain his failure to deliver his written reports as regularly as was expected, but also to reassure his superiors that he would not abandon his duties – even if his health threatened to fail him. In fact, Franchi had been given extreme unction twice, but thanks to the prayers of his peers and those converted by him (plus a paste of ginseng and "tiger claws" rubbed into his aching limbs), he had finally recovered.[71] He asserted that he was willing to continue his work, but also expressed a slight disappointment at not having died and become a martyr. Franchi had to conclude that he was still too much of a sinner to be granted such a "blessed departure" (*einen so seeligen Hintritt*).[72]

Although the reporting missionaries went a long way to assure the Society of their loyalty, sometimes they nonetheless voiced disappointment or dissatisfaction with, for example, their

[68] Sepp & Böhm 1697, 223–225. On the publication context of this travelogue, see Borja González 2011, 85–100.

[69] "Und wer in Europa hätte ihme dieses eingebildet/ daß ein Missionarius auch auff dieses Acht haben muß? ich hätte es nie geglaubt/ und glaube es noch nicht/ sondern siehe es mit meinem Augen/ greiffe es mit meinen Händen." Sepp & Böhm 1697, 225.

[70] NWB I:2 (no. 51), 71.

[71] NWB I:5, 55–56 (no. 108).

[72] NWB I:5, 56 (no. 108). For a similar case from Portuguese America, see Cymbalista 2010, 294.

mission station assignment. This may have reflected certain general trends among missionaries on the waiting-list as to which areas were more desirable than others. Following Diego Luis de San Vitores's martyr death in 1672, for instance, the Mariana missions became popular and a good number of aspiring missionaries expressed their disappointment when being sent elsewhere.[73] Japan was also known as a mission area with good prospects of becoming a martyr.[74] Such sentiments could be conveyed, for example, in the numerous *indipetae* letters surviving in the Jesuit archives.[75] At the same time, some restrictions applied as to what nationalities the Society would send to what missions. Jesuits from the German Assistancy were only rarely assigned to overseas positions in the 17th century, but the situation changed somewhat in the early 18th century so that especially between 1730 and 1750 Jesuits from the German lands were sent to the faraway missions.[76]

Sometimes disappointment grew over time when things did not turn out the way the missionaries had expected. Such a development was described in 1686 by Joseph Neumann, who, as mentioned above, was evangelizing among the Tarahumara people in Mexico. However, Neumann was careful not to include himself among the grumblers. It was other missionaries, who had

> begun to fancy that they are losing all time and effort, or who bemoan that they have been deceived in their vocation, so that they painfully regret (*schmerzlich reuet*) their holy calling because they cannot reach their goal. That is why they are impetuously

[73] Strasser 2015, 573.

[74] Clossey 2008, 125; Cymbalista 2010, 291; Maldavsky 2012, 155.

[75] For a historiographical overview of this material with further references, see Nebgen 2005; Maldavsky 2012.

[76] Nebgen 2005, 78, 92–95; Nebgen 2007, 69–70; Maldavsky 2012, 156.

> pleading with their Superiors to be sent to other missions, where they can be of more use.[77]

The reason for the missionaries' frustration was the slow or lack of progress of the mission among the natives. Neumann delineates in colourful detail the reluctance of the Tarahumara to accept or stick to the Catholic faith. Similar sentiments were reported by Franz Xaver Zephyris from Peru in 1727. Here, it was not only the bad infrastructure, but also the many foreign languages a missionary could hardly master that made mission work tedious, not to mention the alleged "stupidity" of the indigenous.[78] Others, such as Wenceslaus Breyer, who in fact was a predecessor of Zephyris in the Amazon basin in the 1690s, described the difficulty of the missionaries' situation among crocodiles and hostile natives, but refrained from complaining and instead asserted that this was a cross he was willing and able to carry.[79] A further reason for sadness and disappointment may have been what Jacqueline Van Gent has described as emotional investment of the missionaries in their converts; humanly, there was more at stake in the complex relations between missionaries and converts than just proselytization or plain survival of the missionaries in foreign lands.[80]

However, the disappointment described does not amount to total disillusionment or despair (which, in effect, would have been a sin). Also, it is often an emotion that is ascribed to others rather than to the writer himself. This would imply that it was an emotional expression that was discouraged rather than acceptable. The writers concluded in effect that such setbacks were, when regarded in the larger scheme of things, minor issues. The reading of Galaxis Borja

[77] "… anfangen ihnen gäntzlich einzubilden/ sie verliehren hier alle Zeit und Arbeit/ oder sich beklagen/ sie seyen in ihrem Beruff hintergangen worden/ mithin dieselbe ihres heiligen Vorhabens/ da sie dessen Zweck allhier nicht erreichen/ schmerzlich reuet/ daß sie bey denen Oberen um andere Missiones, wo mehr Nutzen zu schaffen wäre/ hefftig bitten." NWB I:1 (no. 32), 103.

[78] NWB III:17 (no. 389), 99–108, esp. p. 101–102.

[79] NWB I:2 (no. 51), 66. See also NWB III:17 (no. 389), 99.

[80] Van Gent 2015b, 246–247.

González of the German-language Jesuit prints of the 18th century suggests that, in fact, nothing could subvert the master narrative of triumphant Jesuit missions in South America. She further interprets the travel account of Sepp and Böhm more as a depiction of pilgrimage than of martyrdom.[81]

Many things speak for the metaphor of pilgrimage in the *Neue Welt-Bott* too. Still, in my view, the aspect of suffering and martyrdom, presented as legitimizing arguments for the Jesuit enterprise and as models for emulation, as I have outlined in this article, should not be underestimated. When skipping through the volumes of the *Neue Welt-Bott*, the tales of martyrs – including images and the mentioned name-lists – are recurrent. Also, Joseph Stöcklein himself, as the prime editor of the work, clearly identified suffering and martyrdom as a central feature of both Jesuit missions and his oeuvre. In one of his prefaces, Stöcklein describes in emotional tones the Jesuit missionaries' work as a ship sailing under a white main flag with a red cross on it, the "blood-coloured cross" signifying the pains of the "Apostolic laborers" (*Apostolische Arbeiter*) who have heroically "washed their clothes in the blood of the lamb slaughtered on the cross". The ultimate prize for the missionaries' many sacrifices, Stöcklein underscored, was salvation and eternal life alongside the holy Apostles.[82] In this process, emotions played a vital role.

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[81] Borja González 2011, 92–93. On the mental connection between the Jesuit mission and pilgrimage, see also Schmid Heer 2013, 32.

[82] NWB I:1, Zuschrifft des Verfassers [no page numbers]. See also Hausberger 2007, 644–645.

Der Neue Welt⸗Bott oder Allerhand so Lehr⸗ als Geist⸗reiche Brief/ Schrifften und Reis⸗Beschreibungen/ welche von denen Missionariis der Gesellschafft Jesu aus Indien und andern weit-entfernten Ländern seit 1642 biß auf das Jahr 1726 in Europa angelangt seynd. Dir. Joseph Stöcklein; Peter Probst; Franz Keller. Augsburg & Graz: Johann und Philipp Martin Veith Erben, 1726–36, and Vienna: Leopold Johann Kaliwoda, 1748–58.

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